

THE CONNECTICUT MARITIME ASSOCIATION

“SHIPPING 2001 - CROSS CURRENTS”

**THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF OCEAN
GOING OFFICERS AND SEAFARERS**

**A FLAG AND PORT STATE ADMINISTRATION
PERSPECTIVE**

MARCH 20, 2001

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(SLIDE 1)

GOOD AFTERNOON LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT'S BOTH A
PLEASURE AND AN HONOR FOR ME TO SPEAK AT THIS
YEAR'S CONFERENCE, AND SHARE SOME THOUGHTS WITH
YOU ABOUT THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF
MARINERS.

MY VIEW WILL BE THAT OF BOTH A FLAG STATE
ADMINISTRATION RESPONSIBLE FOR QUALIFICATION OF
ITS OWN MARINERS, INCLUDING STCW COMPLIANCE;
AND, AS A PORT STATE ADMINISTRATION CONCERNED
THAT MARINERS OPERATING FOREIGN FLAG VESSELS
CALLING IN THE U.S. ARE COMPLYING WITH
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MANNING AND
MARINER QUALIFICATIONS.

IN THE PROCESS, I'LL POSE SOME QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT
AND PERHAPS LATER DISCUSSION.

IN THE U.S., THE SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED MARINERS FOR U.S.
VESSELS IS BECOMING A GROWING CONCERN DUE TO ITS
ASSOCIATED POTENTIAL COSTS FOR RETRAINING, THE
POTENTIAL IMPACT ON MARITIME SAFETY AND U.S.
NATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY REQUIREMENTS. AND,
SAFETY ALONG WITH ITS POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACTS
ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF OUR
WATERWAYS IS OUR CONCERN AS A PORT STATE.

FROM THE SAFETY PERSPECTIVE, STATISTICALLY, SOMETHING LIKE 80% OF ALL MARINE CASUALTIES ARE CAUSED BY HUMAN ELEMENT FAILURE. SO, BY IMPROVING HUMAN ELEMENT PERFORMANCE WE CAN PREVENT UP TO 80% OF THE CASUALTIES. THIS CLEARLY REINFORCES THE NECESSITY TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY MARINERS.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS CITED FOR THE CURRENT SHORTAGE AND THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN A FOCUSED TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AT BOTH INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT MEETINGS.

SEVERAL STUDIES, INCLUDING THE COAST GUARD'S "MTS" STUDY, PREDICT MARITIME TRADE TO DOUBLE OR TRIPLE BY 2020. THESE STUDIES ALSO WARN THAT THE CURRENT DOWNWARD TREND OF AVAILABLE MARINERS, DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL WILL NOT MEET OUR NATION'S FUTURE SHIPPING DEMAND. AGAIN, THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE RECENT BIMCO/ISF FINDINGS.

MANY TRENDS THAT HAVE POSITIVE IMPACTS ALSO CREATE GROWING CONCERN. TECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO ACCELERATE WHILE WAITING FOR NO ONE; CARGO SHIPS ARE GROWING BOTH IN SIZE AND SPEED AS IN-PORT TIME DECREASES; PASSENGER VESSELS ARE OF INCREASING CAPACITY; THE USE OF HIGH SPEED CRAFT IS GROWING; THERE IS A MUCH LOWER TOLERANCE BY THE PUBLIC FOR EITHER LOSS OF LIFE OR ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OF ANY SORT.

SO, I BELIEVE THERE ARE NUMEROUS DIMENSIONS TO THE ISSUE BEYOND RECRUITING AND RETENTION.

AND, A VERY CRITICAL DIMENSION NOT RECEIVING MUCH ATTENTION IS THE POSITIVE AND POTENTIALLY NEGATIVE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY.

GIVEN ALL OF THAT, LET'S CONSIDER A HUMAN ELEMENT ISSUE WITH THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS:

1. THE RECRUITMENT OF MARINERS INTO THE INDUSTRY FOR CAREERS AT SEA AND THEIR RETENTION;
2. THE TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION OF THOSE MARINERS, INCLUDING THE PROPER USE OF TECHNOLOGY;

3. ADEQUATE LEVELS OF MANNING GIVEN THE LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYED AND THE ABILITY TO USE IT;
4. SHIP/SHORE MANAGEMENT THAT RECOGNIZES GAPS BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS;
5. AND, INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGIMES TO ADDRESS THE ABOVE.

(SLIDE 2)

NONE OF THESE DIMENSIONS IS MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. THEY ARE ALL LIKE THE STRANDS OF A HAWSER, EACH ADDING STRENGTH TO THE HAWSER, OR THE LACK THEREOF CONTRIBUTING TO ITS WEAKNESS.

SO, AS I BRIEFLY ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH STRAND MY COMMENTS WILL NECESSARILY INTERTWINE.

FIRST, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

SPECIFICALLY, IN THE U.S., I UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING GREAT DIFFICULTY IN FILLING THE LOWER LICENSED AND ENTRY LEVEL POSITIONS. AND THOSE ENTRY LEVEL OFFICERS COME MOSTLY FROM THE FEDERAL AND STATE MARITIME ACADEMIES WITH SOME OFFICERS THROUGH THE “HAWSE PIPE.”

I BELIEVE THAT STCW '95 AMENDMENTS WILL MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE FOR UNLICENSED MARINERS TO ASCEND THROUGH THE HAWSE PIPE ON THEIR OWN RESOURCES IN THE FUTURE. A STRUCTURE WILL BE NEEDED TO ALLOW UNLICENSED MARINERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME LICENSED.

I OFTEN ASK MYSELF, WHEN I CHOSE TO ATTEND THE MARITIME COLLEGE IN NEW YORK AND CONTEMPLATED A CAREER AT SEA OR IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY, WHAT WERE MY MOTIVES? WHAT ATTRACTED ME?

WELL, AT THAT TIME, AS WE SAY IN THE COAST GUARD, A LIKING FOR THE SEA AND ITS LORE, ALONG WITH EXCEPTIONAL PAY, THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL AND SEE SOME OF THE WORLD AS PART OF MY WORK, AND SOME ROMANTIC IDEA THAT THIS WAS ADVENTURE.

IF MY VISION HAD ANY TRUTH TO IT, SOME OF WHAT ATTRACTED ME TO CONSIDER GOING TO SEA OR A MARITIME INDUSTRY CAREER IS GONE OR CHANGED CONSIDERABLY. NOT TO MENTION THAT TODAY'S GENERATION THINKS DIFFERENTLY IN MANY WAYS THAN MINE.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS RECRUITING, IS RETAINING THE MARINERS THAT WE DO HAVE. AN IMPROVEMENT IN OUR ABILITY TO RETAIN PERSONNEL, WOULD REDUCE OUR RECRUITING AND TRAINING NEEDS AND COSTS. WHEN MID-CAREER MARINERS RELINQUISH THEIR SEAFARING LIVES TO PURSUE OTHER INTERESTS, THE KNOWLEDGE BASE OF THIS INDUSTRY IS UNDERMINED, REQUIRING INCREASED TRAINING EFFORT AND COST. AND, LESS EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL INCREASE OPERATIONAL RISK.

EXPERIENCE, SO VITAL TO EFFICIENT AND SAFE OPERATIONS JUST TAKES TIME. TRAINING, HOWEVER WELL DONE, SIMPLY DOESN'T MAKE UP FOR TIME UNDERWAY.

(SLIDE 3)

GIVEN THE TRENDS THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER IN MY PRESENTATION, HOW DO WE COLLECTIVELY APPROACH RECRUITING AND RETENTION IN A METHODOICAL AND COORDINATED WAY TO MOTIVATE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN, TO GO TO SEA AND REMAIN IN THE INDUSTRY? THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS OUR MOST BASIC AND FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM. IT'S THE CORE OF OUR HAWSER, TO CONTINUE THAT ANALOGY.

SO, WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY ELEMENTS OF OUR RECRUITING AND RETENTION EFFORTS?

I LIKE TO THINK OF IT AS A SYSTEMS APPROACH, OR, MORE SIMPLY, USING THE HAWSER ANALOGY, THE THREADS THAT MAKE UP THE STRAND.

(SLIDE 4)

THE THREADS REPRESENT, AMONG OTHER THINGS:

- THE NEED FOR A STRONG PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPLE SOURCE OF OFFICERS, THE MARITIME ACADEMIES, AND THE CUSTOMER – THE INDUSTRY LABOR – AND GOVERNMENT;

- CAREER OPPORTUNITIES – CREATING A VIABLE STRUCTURE FOR “HAWSE PIPERS”; AND, COUNTERING THE PERCEPTION OF POTENTIAL MARINERS THAT THERE IS NO FUTURE AFLOAT OR ASHORE IN THE INDUSTRY;
- AN UNDERSTANDING BY POTENTIAL MARINERS THAT THE INDUSTRY IS BROAD AND DIVERSE IN ITS SECTORS AND MANY SECTORS ARE EXPERIENCING OR WILL LIKELY EXPERIENCE STRONG GROWTH;
- THE NEED FOR A POSITIVE VIEW OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AND ITS VALUE TO OUR ECONOMIC HEALTH; AND,
- ATTRACTIVE PAY AND BENEFITS AND OTHER INCENTIVES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.

THERE IS NO SIMPLE ANSWER TO ATTRACTING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED MARINERS. WHICH THREADS ARE STRONG, WHICH ARE WEAK; ARE THERE OTHERS?

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS OF TODAY'S MARINERS, THE NEXT STRAND, IS CERTAINLY AN EQUIVALENT CHALLENGE.

TRAINING IS AMONG THE INCENTIVES FOR PROSPECTIVE MARINERS, AS WELL AS FOR THE CURRENT WORKFORCE THAT WE DESIRE TO RETAIN. THE OFFERING OF IMPROVED TRAINING TO SEAFARERS - TRAINING THAT IS DIVERSE AND FLEXIBLE - TRAINING THAT TELLS THEM THAT THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO THIS INDUSTRY IS CRITICAL TO RECRUITING AND RETENTION.

IT IS ALSO CRITICAL IN DEALING WITH THE TECHNOLOGY ISSUE I THAT MENTIONED EARLIER.

STCW, WITH THE '95 AMENDMENTS, HAS PROVIDED A FRAMEWORK TO DEFINE THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS OF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS. THE CONVENTION NOW INCLUDES REQUIREMENTS FOR MARINERS TO PROVE THEIR ABILITY IN VARIOUS COMPETENCIES THROUGH A COMBINATION OF TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE.

THIS IS SORELY NEEDED FROM MY PORT STATE CONTROL PERSPECTIVE. CREW TRAINING AND COMPETENCE CONTINUE TO BE PROBLEM AREAS.

CREW COMPETENCE IN FIRE AND BOAT DRILLS AND LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF ISM DOCUMENTED PROCEDURES REMAIN PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF PORT STATE CONTROL DETENTIONS IN THE U.S.

CLEARLY, AS TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES AND TIME PASSES, FUTURE TRENDS WILL REQUIRE US TO MODIFY THE CURRENT REQUIREMENTS OF STCW - WE APPEAR TO HAVE A GOOD START.

IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO FOLLOW THE ACTIVITY AS IMO WORKS COMPLETELY THROUGH THE FIRST ROUND OF ASSESSMENT OF FULL AND COMPLETE IMPLEMENTATION OF STCW BY FLAG ADMINISTRATORS AND ADDS TO THE “WHITE LIST.”

(SLIDE 5)

THE STCW 95 AMENDMENTS ARE SCHEDULED TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED BY THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY 2002. WILL THEY BE ADEQUATE TO DEAL WITH THE RATE OF ADVANCE OF TECHNOLOGY AS APPLIED TO MARITIME OPERATIONS? FOR HOW LONG?

TRAINING AND STCW REQUIREMENTS, ALTHOUGH DEEMED
ESSENTIAL, ALSO HAVE A POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT
ON RETENTION.

(SLIDE 6)

THERE IS A GROWING CONCERN THAT THE COST AND
COMPLEXITY OF MEETING STCW REQUIREMENTS FOR
LICENSE RENEWAL IS REDUCING THE POOL OF POTENTIAL
SEAFARERS THAT EITHER AREN'T ACTIVE OR OTHERWISE
HAVE TO FOOT THE BILL THEMSELVES. HOW DO WE DEAL
WITH THIS TO MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATE POOL OF
MARINERS?

(SLIDE 7)

THE NEXT STRAND, ***MANNING LEVELS***, OVER THE YEARS HAS
BEEN CONTINUOUSLY REDUCED AS TECHNOLOGY HAS
ADVANCED AND BEEN USED TO REPLACE SEAFARERS.
ARE WE NOW AT CRITICAL MASS IN TERMS OF CREW
SIZE?

WHEN CREWS WERE CONSIDERABLY LARGER AND A SHIP SUFFERED A MAJOR CASUALTY, THERE WERE USUALLY A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF PERSONNEL TO WORK AT SAVING THE VESSEL AND ITS CARGO. TODAY IT SEEMS THAT THERE ARE HARDLY ENOUGH PERSONNEL ABOARD TO ABANDON THE VESSEL SAFETY, LET ALONE TRY TO MINIMIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A MAJOR ACCIDENT.

MANNING ALSO HAS A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON RETENTION. SOCIALIZATION ON VESSELS HAS DRAMATICALLY REDUCED WITH THE MANNING LEVELS WE SEE TODAY, NOT TO MENTION THE WORKLOAD THAT SHIP'S OFFICERS NOW EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY THE SENIOR OFFICERS.

ARE MANNING LEVELS ADEQUATE TO SAFELY OPERATE - TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF TECHNOLOGY? DOES TECHNOLOGY ADEQUATELY COMPENSATE FOR TODAY'S MANNING LEVELS? WHAT ABOUT THE SOCIALIZATION ISSUE - IS IT A SAFETY ISSUE TOO?

THE NEXT STRAND INVOLVES THE NEED FOR THE *SHIPS'*
MANAGEMENT TO RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS OF THE
MARINER AND TO RECOGNIZE WHERE GAPS OCCUR
BETWEEN THEIR OPERATIONS AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF
TECHNOLOGY. IF IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY, THE
INTERNATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT CODE SHOULD
HELP BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONS GAPS.

THIS INCLUDES PROCEDURES THAT LINK TECHNOLOGY TO
OPERATIONS, THAT KEEP THE MARINER IN MIND.

PERHAPS WE HAVE DONE MORE TO DEVELOP TECHNOLOGY
THAN IN IMPLEMENTING IT WELL.

(SLIDE 8)

HOWEVER, NO MATTER WHAT LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY IS
IMPLEMENTED I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE ARE THE KEY TO
IMPLEMENTING AND USING THE TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS
BEEN DEVELOPED. IS TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED WITH
THE MARINER IN MIND AND DO WE ADEQUATELY
CONSIDER ITS POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AS WELL AS ITS
BENEFITS?

(SLIDE 9)

SO, IN SUMMARY, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE AS A FLAG AND
PORT STATE CONTROL ADMINISTRATOR:

- RECRUITING AND RETENTION ARE THE BASIC KEYS TO
SUCCESS IN MAINTAINING SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY
SOUND AND EFFICIENT MARITIME OPERATIONS;
- RETENTION IMPROVEMENTS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO
REDUCE TRAINING NEEDS AND IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE
LEVEL OF MARINERS;
- THERE ARE TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE THAT TEND TO
MAKE THE CURRENT SHORTAGES WORSE;
- THE ISSUE OF RECRUITING AND RETENTION HAS
NUMEROUS DIMENSIONS BEYOND THE BASIC ISSUE SUCH
AS: TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS, MANNING LEVELS
AND TECHNOLOGY, VESSEL MANAGEMENT, AND THE
FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS;
- THOSE VARIOUS DIMENSIONS ARE INTERTWINED AND
INTERDEPENDENT – ANALOGOUS TO THE STRANDS OF A
HAWSER;

(SLIDE 11)

- I'VE POSED SEVERAL QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEM/SOLUTION: MARITIME ACADEMY/INDUSTRY/GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP, A STRUCTURE FOR "HAWSE PIPERS", NEED FOR A POSITIVE VIEW OF THE INDUSTRY AND ITS ECONOMIC HEALTH, NEED TO PROMOTE INDUSTRY CAREER OPPORTUNITIES, INCENTIVES AND TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS.

WHAT'S THE WAY AHEAD, AN ACTION PLAN INVOLVING ALL STAKEHOLDERS IS NEEDED.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ALL WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED ACTION PLAN THAT WILL BEST SERVE OUR FUTURE MUTUAL INTERESTS

(SLIDE 12)

IN THAT SPIRIT, THE COAST GUARD, MARITIME
ADMINISTRATION, NUMEROUS LABOR AND INDUSTRY
GROUPS, AND THE SEAMAN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE ARE
PLANNING A CONFERENCE ON RECRUITING, RETENTION
AND TRAINING OF MARINERS ON MAY 23-24, 2001 AT THE
U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY AT KINGS POINT, NY.
THE CONFERENCE TITLE IS "A MARITIME CAREER:
CREATING AN ACTION PLAN FOR RECRUITING AND
RETAINING AMERICAN MARINERS."

THE CONFERENCE HOPES TO ATTRACT 200 OR MORE PEOPLE,
REPRESENTING A CROSS-SECTION OF STAKEHOLDER
INTERESTS INCLUDING ACTIVE, WORKING MARINERS, TO
DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE TRENDS,
REVIEW BEST PRACTICES, AND IDENTIFY AN ACTION
PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. I HOPE THAT MANY OF YOU WILL
BE ABLE TO ATTEND.

THANK YOU.